

# ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITY BUSINESS CLUB

ADELPHIA, PHILADELPHIA

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## THE SESQUI-CENTENNIAL

How it Could be Made of Permanent Use to Philadelphia  
and its Educational Institutions

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*A UNIQUE SUGGESTION TO ENCOURAGE FOREIGN NATIONS  
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXPOSITION*

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By GEORGE E. NITZSCHE.

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The following is a report of an address delivered before the CITY BUSINESS CLUB on Monday, January 7, 1921, by George E. Nitzsche, Recorder of the University of Pennsylvania and First Vice-President of the Philadelphia Rotary Club.

It is as a booster for Philadelphia that I come before the City Business Club, and not as an officer of the University, or of any other organization. Your Chairman, Dr. P. S. Stout, knowing of my long connection with the University, informed me that I could talk shop some of the time, so you will have to forgive me if I should appear to be somewhat prejudiced. You will also understand my enthusiasm, therefore, when I maintain that, aside from the city's history, the most effective single advertising asset in the city is the University of Pennsylvania. I say this with due respect to other big educational institutions in our midst such as Temple, Drexel, Jefferson, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, and many others. I fully realize the value of each, but must leave it to others to speak for them.

We have an enrollment at the University of 12,000 students, who have registered from every State in the Union, and 253 students from at least fifty foreign countries and foreign territories, including India, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and practically all the British possessions except Ireland; every Latin American country, and most of the Oriental and European nations. Were we able to expand our physical plant and increase our staff to take care of all who apply and who qualify, we would have a total enrollment of 25,000 within a few years; but this would require an income of four or five millions each year—in other words, an endowment of from fifty to a hundred million. This sounds big, but I believe several of the Western State Universities are already close to these figures in their annual budgets.

If Philadelphia's leading educational institution is to keep pace with some of the Universities of the West, many of which were founded a hundred years after Pennsylvania, you will realize why the University needs the support and co-operation of every citizen.

Just to give an illustration of what an institution like the University of Pennsylvania means to the city from a business viewpoint. Aside from the 253 foreign students, there are almost seven thousand students from places outside of Philadelphia. Most of these spend considerably more than a thousand dollars each year in Philadelphia, or a total of more than six million dollars. If you add to this the money spent by local students, the total would be close to ten millions. The same is true of Temple, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, Jefferson, Drexel, Hahnemann, and others. Then calculate, if you will, the value of the constant stream of foreign students in Philadelphia, as an international trade asset.

No less than forty thousand of the sons of the University are now practicing their professions in all parts of the world, and talking "Philadelphia" some of the time. Is there any reason why every Philadelphian should not take an intense interest in the University's growth, expansion and development? Even though, as has been advocated, the University should become merged with State College and Pittsburgh, as one great State University, the interest of Philadelphians in developing our local plant should only increase. By naming such a combined University "Franklin" we might avoid all misunderstandings as to the name most appropriate.

What I am about to suggest would be one way that the University and affiliated institutions, as well as other great educational institutions in Philadelphia, could secure a campus and physical plant that would be unequalled in any metropolis in the world. The University is in no way back of the proposition I am about to make, and I am not speaking as an official of the University, but simply as one interested in the development of our city.

What I have in mind is the proposed exposition of 1926. In planning for such a Fair, I have for years urged the selection of a site between the campus of the University and Fairmount Park, so that its grounds and buildings might be used by the University and affiliated educational scientific institutions.

It is gratifying to know that the World's Fair project for 1926 is now being taken up seriously by the Mayor and a number of civic bodies and citizens. If we are to have a World's Fair in 1926, no time can be lost in the five years ahead of us. Realizing that much time is needed for the planning of greater expositions, nine years ago I urged upon the University authorities the advisability of beginning then to prepare to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the actual opening of the University, commemorating it in connection with an International Exposition in 1926. Again, in 1916, speaking before the Rotary Club, I suggested that, even while the World War was then in progress, the city prepare for such a Fair, making it big enough in scope to include, "the celebration of the conclusion of the greatest war in history, and the freedom of every nation on earth;" and that it might be dedicated "to the end of all wars amongst all nations."

If you will pardon just one more personal reference, on that same occasion I pointed out that the most appropriate site for the Fair would be the Parkway, Spring Garden Bridge, Thirty-fourth Street, from Girard Avenue to the University grounds; and last June I again addressed

Rotary upon the subject of the advantages of this site, when a Committee, of which I have the honor to be Chairman, was appointed to co-operate with the Rotary Clubs of the world, and with any permanent organization that might be formed in Philadelphia.

It was with delight therefore that I learned through the public press a few weeks ago that plans for the Fair had been prepared by Paul Cret, which included a large part of the site heretofore suggested, and which would add greatly to our park system by beautifying the banks of the Schuylkill—my only regret is that the plans were not continued to Point Breeze, thus opening Fairmount Park to the whole of South Philadelphia.

But above all, I should like to have seen included in those plans the extension of the Parkway, over Spring Garden bridge, to Thirty-fourth Street, and thence to the University Campus, as outlined in the plan before you (Reproduced on page 8), which Dr. Stout requested me to explain to you today.

What I had in mind was to connect all worthy war memorial projects with the proposed Exposition, so as to include an "Arch of Triumph," a Convention Hall, a stadium, a War Museum, and other buildings, monuments and institutions—"A Liberty Boulevard"—which would in time excel in beauty the Champs Élysées in Paris, and which, with the present Parkway and Fairmount Park, could become an admirable Exposition site. It would be difficult to choose in Philadelphia a more appropriate site than this, which would eliminate waste almost entirely, and at the same time develop a series of boulevards and plazas that would rival those in other great cities of the world.

When I first made this suggestion I was thinking of this proposed exposition not only as a means of beautifying our city but more particularly (and probably selfishly) for the opportunity it might afford the University and other educational institutions for expansion towards and connection with Fairmount Park. As I stated, the University is in no way committed to the plan, or to any other so far as I know. But, having been associated with the University for more than a quarter of a century, I naturally have an interest in its development.

Fairmount Park has gradually spread out so that its southern boundary along the west banks of the Schuylkill is now within a mile of the campus of the University—a stretch about the same length as that of the Parkway, which has brought City Hall to the edge of Fairmount Park. It is this connecting link which I wish to suggest again as a part of the general plan and site for the proposed Exposition. Incidentally it would bring the University and other institutions to the edge of a park of more than 3000 acres, as charming as any in the world, and it would provide West Philadelphia with a wide North and South Street for which it has been clamoring for years. At the present time there is not a single street between the Schuylkill and Fifty-second Street, running North and South.

The plan would not in any way conflict with the provisions made by the City Planning and Park Extension Committees for a boulevard along the banks of the Schuylkill, which has been worked out so admirably by Professor Cret and others.

The plan I have had in mind would be to condemn and demolish all property between the University Campus and Fairmount Park along the east side of Thirty-fourth Street and the west side of Thirty-third Street, and replace it with a boulevard about four hundred feet wide, making it a continuation of the present west drive in Fairmount Park between Mantua Avenue and Girard Avenue. The distance between the two points is about a mile, and the project would cost only a fraction of what the Parkway cost, and would enhance the value of contiguous real estate. At the same time, most of the properties along both sides of both streets, and the lots facing the new boulevard might be condemned for Exposition purposes, which I am informed could be done under the provisions of the proposed new State Constitution,—with the view to utilizing this stretch in after years for the expansion of the University and other educational and scientific institutions. This was done with other exposition sites, for Chicago University, for Washington University at St. Louis, and for Washington State University at Seattle. These communities fully realized the value of such far-sighted policies.

Of course, there would be many legal and physical difficulties to be overcome in acquiring the properties in question. Other cities, however, have successfully met similar problems; and the fact that the properties along the Parkway took us twenty years to acquire should not deter us;—it should be considered in the light of having taught us a valuable lesson. Miles of filthy narrow streets of Paris were several generations ago transformed into beautiful wide boulevards, plazas and charming open areas, which have paid Paris a thousand fold each year. She has become the show place of Europe, to which there is a never ending pilgrimage of tourists from all over the world.

At Spring Garden Street, running at right angles with the proposed Thirty-fourth Street Boulevard, there would be a small connecting boulevard of two squares; and as at present a bridge over the railroad yards and the Schuylkill River, connecting the main boulevard with East Park, the Parkway and City Hall Plaza. The bridge, if widened or rebuilt, has wonderful artistic possibilities from an architectural standpoint, and would become a monumental approach from West Philadelphia to the Art Gallery now being built on the old reservoir hill. It would also form the curve of a wide horse shoe, which would connect the University Campus and West Philadelphia with City Hall, and enable one to visit either, as well as any of the institutions located upon these boulevards without the necessity of going through city streets. It would also fit in well with the proposed new bridge over the Schuylkill a little beyond Blockley, which would connect the boulevard and Fairmount Park with South Philadelphia.

A permanent triumphal arch, if we must have one, would also fit in with the plan, and could be placed on the plaza suggested for the end of the boulevard at the entrance to the park at the southern end of the Zoölogical Gardens. Any memorial arch should have on either side wide and dignified approaches. In this locality the arch could be seen from either side for many miles—this being one of the highest points. Along the walks and drives leading up to this arch might be planted memorial trees to the Philadelphia boys who gave their lives for the cause of



liberty. On either side of the new boulevard would be memorial halls, exposition and other buildings. For instance, the Pennsylvania Railroad might build a new station in West Philadelphia facing this proposed boulevard. At a pivotal point opposite the Spring Garden bridge might be a great War Museum, as a part of the exposition, and as a tribute to the State of Pennsylvania, which had a more important part in the war than any other State. Such a building, while devoted to many useful purposes, might also contain war trophies of Pennsylvania men, and a permanent collection, well classified, of every type of firearm and material used by all nations in the great war. Most of the material could still be obtained in large quantities from the various governments at little more than the cost of transportation. Such a museum would also make an attractive feature of a Fair, and be of great historical value and interest to future generations.

Many world's fairs have been held both here and abroad, but on the sites of each only a few buildings remain—a waste in each instance of from twenty to fifty millions. It is again suggested therefore that a site be selected and prepared with a view to its becoming a part of a general plan for the city beautiful, and that all buildings be constructed of permanent material, and thus become substantial monuments to the corporation, city, state or country, responsible for them. These buildings might be constructed along the proposed boulevard from the Park to the University Campus, and form a kind of "Court of all Nations." Naturally the new Art Museum, Convention Hall, Library, and other monumental buildings along the Parkway would become a part of the Exposition, as would the War Museum just proposed, the Academy of Natural Sciences, Franklin Institute, the Aquarium, Zoölogical Gardens, Commercial Museums, the proposed stadium, and various museums at the University. There are so many opportunities that suggest themselves to me whereby present institutions might benefit, and at the same time save Exposition funds. For example, the University Museum, which is now about one-sixth finished, might be completed, and house the Fair's archæological exhibit from all parts of the world—making it second to none.

I see no reason why it should be necessary to have the grounds of the Exposition enclosed—in fact I think it would be more effective and unique to include the entire city, or "the Workshop of the World," in the general plan.

While the main buildings might be located along or near the boulevards, the Fair might be sufficiently large in scope to include most of the industrial establishments of the city, and tickets could be issued to admit the holders not only to the special exposition buildings, but to any of the industrial establishments. This would give visitors a better knowledge of production than any number of specially arranged exhibits, booths and models, usually designed for exhibitions.

After the exposition closed, the buildings along the proposed boulevard might be converted into permanent quarters for numerous educational and scientific institutions. For instance, they might be devoted to housing various University schools; to new quarters for Temple, Jefferson, Drexel, Philadelphia School of Pharmacy, and hosts of others. Other

suggestions are a Mining Engineering School, a Naval Construction School, a Museum of Geology—the importance of these subjects in this State would seem to indicate that such institutions and others might be established to advantage. One group of buildings might be devoted to a Woman's College, another to a School of Education, etc. Exposition hotels might be converted into student dormitories. The Departments of Biology and Zoölogy of the University and other schools might advantageously occupy buildings near the park and the Zoölogical Gardens; schools of fine art, architecture, and allied subjects, near the Municipal Art Gallery. The present buildings of the University devoted to zoölogy and biology with adjacent grounds and also the Philadelphia Hospital buildings will probably all be needed by the medical and graduate medical schools.

In other words, there would be immediate use for every building vacated by the Exposition; and such structures as the stadium in Snyder's Woods would be virtually on the campus of the university and the institutions mentioned. The same is true of an open-air theatre, for which several natural sites are available along the west banks of the Schuylkill near the proposed boulevard, where it could be utilized for open-air pageants, musicals, and plays, as well as afford a grandstand from which to view river carnivals, boat races and fireworks.

I believe that organizations such as the City Business Club could bring about the realization of the plans which I have so crudely outlined. The architects, builders, financiers and practical business men, who are members of your Club, could, I am sure, greatly improve upon these suggestions. I merely wanted to present the possibilities to your attention for serious consideration.

#### PLAN TO ENCOURAGE FOREIGN EXHIBITS.

Now just one more thought, and I am through. While this thought will be quite ambitious in scope, I believe it will appeal to the members of the City Business Club. It is this:

The keynote of the annual convention of International Rotary at Atlantic City last year was that the spirit of the members was gradually but surely developing into a "League of Men." Such a league, as a matter of course, would include the great cosmopolitan mass of business and professional men such as the members of the City Business Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Business Science Club, Rotary, and a host of others organized for good fellowship. Through the friendships formed in such organizations as these, there is being created a spirit of tolerance and universal brotherhood, of fair play, and of a desire to practice the golden rule. Business men thus inspired will bring about higher standards of ethics in their respective vocations in all parts of the world.

The members of these organizations have opportunities to accomplish incalculable good in the business world during the next five years; and to those in Philadelphia I would recommend that they get together and organize a real "League of Men" and prepare to hold their first world-wide convention in Philadelphia during the Sesqui-Centennial of 1926. The task would be a big one, but I believe it would be possible. No place could be more appropriate than Philadelphia to start such a move-

ment, and no occasion more fitting than the proposed Exposition. I believe that the beautiful and unselfish spirit fostered by such organizations as these is capable of accomplishing this end.

As one of the means toward that end I might suggest that the members of the City Business Club, Kiwanis, Rotary and similar bodies of busy men in Philadelphia get together and co-operate with similar clubs throughout the United States to formulate some plan to lighten the war debts of Europe, and at the same time encourage foreign nations to co-operate with us in making the Exposition of 1926 not only bigger in scope than the celebration of our Independence, but the greatest and most important Fair ever held—a permanent monument to universal peace and to the brotherhood of man and nations.

The thought I had in mind was to arrange to have the great nations of Europe compete with each other in building upon the site selected for the Fair (or upon a separate site that could be used to better advantage), permanent palaces that would rival anything heretofore attempted—structures that would excel in beauty and magnificence those of the Roman Forum, the Appian Way, King Solomon's Temple, Karnak, Baalbec, and other ancient buildings, and groups of buildings; in other words, something that would become not one of the, but "*the wonder of the world*," which would make this Fair project international for all time. The total amount spent by each nation upon such buildings I would deduct from its debt to the United States, and, after the Exposition, have the United States Government purchase the buildings by cancelling a similar amount of the indebtedness to us; in other words, for every dollar spent by such foreign nations, the United States would credit them with having paid two dollars of their debt to us. We can afford to be generous, and in making such allowances, I would not even take advantage of the present low rate of exchange. The buildings would become the permanent property of the United States, which would designate the use to which they might be put in after years. The buildings would always, nevertheless, remain as monuments to the nations which erected them. The avenue, or court, along which such buildings might be erected would itself become a monument to the generosity of the American people to their allies.

Of course, I realize that structures such as those here outlined would require in some cases from twenty to thirty years to complete. If the idea were adopted my thought was, so far as these foreign buildings were concerned, to build the outer walls at first with staff or temporary material, so as to be ready for the Fair, and to have the foreign nations complete them with permanent material later—this would also give city planners, landscape experts and architects ample opportunity to rectify any inharmonious units.

If only one-tenth of the indebtedness to the United States were thus cancelled (let us hope it would be many times greater), it would give an opportunity to the most eminent architects and builders of the world to accomplish something greater, more enduring and more beautiful than anything ever attempted by man.

I have finished my little dream—only a league of unselfish men, co-operating and working together for the good and happiness of all, can make it come true.

